

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 /083 W

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R 060809Z APR 76

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3035

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0465

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ

SUBJ: IRAQI PRESS COVERAGE OF EVENTS IN ISRAEL AND LEBANON

1. ON MARCH 31, IRAQI PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS STAGED THROUGHOUT IRAQ ON MARCH 30 ON THE OCCASION OF "LAND DAY." DEMONSTRATIONS EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ALL SCHOOLS, FACTORIES, AND OFFICES INTERRUPTED THEIR NORMAL ACTIVITIES FOR 15 MINUTES AND TRAFFIC WAS STOPPED ON THE PRINCIPAL STREETS OF BAGHDAD. COMMENT: DEMONSTRATIONS PRODUCED LITTLE DETECTABLE EXCITEMENT IN BAGHDAD. END COMMENT.

2. FROM MARCH 31 THROUGH APRIL 3, PRESS DID ITS BEST TO CREATE VIVID IMAGE OF WASHINGTON-TEL AVIV-DAMASCUS AXIS OPERATING IN SINISTER WAYS TO SUPPRESS THE LEBANESE NATIONALIST FORCES, I.E. LEFT WING. AND DEPRIVE THESE FORCES OF THE FRUITS OF THEIR VICTORIES. JUMBLAT IS PORTRAYED AS POPULAR HERO AND SYRIANS, AS USUAL, ARE CAST IN ROLE OF VILLAINS. SECRETARY'S COMMENT  
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THAT SYRIANS HAD PLAYED USEFUL ROLE WAS QUOTED AS EVIDENCE

THAT SYRIANS HAVE NOW BECOME WILLING DUPES OF WASHINGTON.

3. ATH-THAWRA PUBLISHING HOUSE ISSUED A REPORT ON APRIL 1 ANALYZING AMERICAN POSITION VIS-A-VIS LEBANON. REPORT REFERRED TO DEPT. OF STATE STATEMENT ON LEBANON OF MARCH 29 AND CONCLUDED THAT USG POLICY CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS:

- A) TO "INSTIGATE" THE SYRIAN REGIME TO INCREASE ITS OPPOSITION TO THE "NATIONAL MOVEMENT" IN LEBANON
- B) TO THREATEN AMERICAN INTERVENTION UNDER PRETEXT OF MEDIATION AND EVACUATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS.

REPORT THEN CALLS ON UNITED STATES TO STOP ITS AGGRESSION IN LEBANON'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND TO STOP INSTIGATING OTHERS TO INTERVENE IN LEBANON. IT ADDS THAT ALL ARAB NATIONAL AND PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS CONSIDER AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AS AGGRESSION, NOT ONLY AGAINST LEBANON, BUT AGAINST ENTIRE ARAB WORLD, AND THAT THE ARABS ARE FREE TO TAKE THE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO COUNTER THIS AGGRESSION "IMMEDIATELY AND WHERE IT TAKES PLACE."

4. ON APRIL 1, IRAQI NEWS AGENCY CARRIED OFFICIAL DENIAL BY FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN THAT IRAQ HAD THREATENED TO INTERVENE IN LEBANON. SPOKESMAN QUOTED A STATEMENT MADE ON MARCH 30 BY "FALANGIST RADIO" THAT IRAQI GOVT. HAD INFORMED THAT SYRIAN CHARGE IN BAGHDAD THAT IRAQ WOULD INTERVENE IN LEBANON IN THE EVENT OF A SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION. SPOKESMAN SAID THAT NO MESSAGE HAD BEEN PASSED TO SYRIAN CHARGE AND THAT ATTITUDE OF IRAQI GOVT. TOWARDS EVENTS IN LEBANON IS "CLEAR AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD IN REJECTING ANY EXTERNAL INTERVENTION IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF LEBANON."

5. COMMENT: IRAQI ANTI-AMERICAN BLUSTER IS STANDARD GRIST FOR IRAQ'S GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS AND CONTAINS NO SURPRISES. IRAQI PROPAGANDISTS APPARENTLY MORE INTERESTED IN FINDING NEW CLUB WITH WHICH TO LAMBAST SYRIAN REGIME THAN THEY ARE IN OUTCOME OF TRAGIC EVENTS IN LEBANON. GOI DENIAL OF INTERVENTION THREAT IS PROBABLY A DEFENSIVE MEASURE DESIGNED TO PREVENT SYRIAN USE OF THE ALLEGED THREAT TO JUSTIFY THEIR OWN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON. IRAQI REGIME SEEMS MOTIVATED PRIMARILY BY

- A) ITS DESIRE THAT SYRIAN REGIME GET BURNED IN LEBANON, AND
- B) ITS FEAR THAT LEBANESE CONFLICT COULD EXPAND TO DETRIMENT OF IRAQ'S CURRENT ECONOMIC RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST AND FORCE A

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DIVERSION OF IRAQ'S RESOURCES AWAY FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOWARDS A GREATER MILITARY EFFORT. WHILE GOI WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO USE LEBANESE SITUATION AS PRETEXT TO ATTACK SYRIA AND THE UNITED STATES AND TO DEMONSTRATE IRAQ'S LEFTIST IDEOLOGICAL CREDENTIALS, WE ALSO HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE REGIME IS BECOMING WOMEWHAT CONCERNED OVER THE POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING EFFECT THE LEBANESE CONFLICT COULD HAVE ON THE ENTIRE REGION. END COMMENT.

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